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CLICK HERE for Multiple Property Listing, "Black
Metropolis Thematic Resources"

PROPERTY NAME EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY
LOCATION 3533 S. Giles Avenue CITY/TOWN/VICINITY Chicago
COUNTY Cook STATE Illinois ZIP 60653

OWNER'S NAME Alonzo A. Todd
LOCATION 1700 E. 56th Street Apt. 3405 CITY/TOWN/VICINITY Chicago
STATE Illinois ZIP 60637

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION Cook County Recorder of Deeds
118 N. Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION LOT 3 EX. N. 116 FT., EX W. 33 FT, ASSESSORS DIVISION OF
NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ OF SEC. 34-39-14

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE Less than one acre

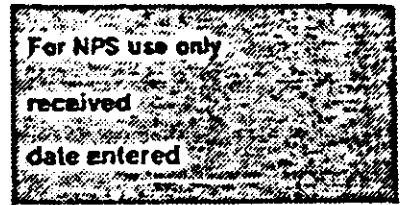
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1914-15 ARCHITECT AND/OR BUILDER J.B. Dibelka, architect

DESCRIPTION Three story and basement brick building faced with brown pressed brick
with Bedford limestone trim. Interior spaces include a clear-span
drill hall and various meeting rooms, dining facilities and reception
parlors.

DATE AND NATURE OF ALTERATIONS Largely in original condition, although vacant
and slightly deteriorated.

OUTBUILDINGS AND/OR OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES ON PROPERTY (ATTACH SKETCH
PLAN IF APPLICABLE) N/A

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY

Item number 7 & 8

Page 1

EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY
3533 South Giles Avenue

Date of construction: 1914-15

Architect: J.B. Dibelka

Erected at a cost of \$250,000 the Eighth Regiment Armory was built by the Illinois National Guard as headquarters for the only regiment in the county to be commanded entirely by blacks. Originally organized as a volunteer regiment drawn from the black community during the Spanish-American War in 1898, the "Fighting 8th" was established as an infantry division of the Illinois National Guard, with its regimental headquarters located in a former livery stable at the corner of 35th Street and Forest Avenue. These accommodations proved to be wholly inadequate for military purposes, consequently petitions were started in the state legislature as early as 1910 for the construction of a new armory building.

Construction on the new armory was started late in 1914, and was largely completed by the winter of the following year. Designed by Chicago architect James B. Dibelka, who was chief architect for the State of Illinois, the building gave a strong appearance of strength and monumentality through the detailing of its brown pressed brick and Bedford limestone facade, yet at the same time was visually balanced with the residential buildings which surrounded it. The principal room of the interior was the massive drill hall which clear-spanned across nearly the full depth of the building, the roof being carried by trusses. The balance of the building was planned for the varied offices and functions of the regiment, including a banquet hall, two reception halls, a dining room with full kitchen facilities, and a bowling alley. The building was also intended to be available for community use, and was the site of numerous neighborhood meetings and social functions. At the time of its completion, the Eighth Regiment Armory was the only building of its type to be erected for use by a black regiment in the United States.

Under command of Colonel Franklin A. Denison, a practicing lawyer and former Assistant Attorney General of the State of Illinois, the Eighth Regiment saw meritorious service during border conflicts with Mexico in 1916, and later in World War I when it was incorporated into the 370th U.S. Infantry, serving on the major battlefronts of France. The "Fighting 8th" gained special note as the last regiment to drive the German forces from the Aisne-Marne region prior to the armistice on November 11, 1918.

Upon their return, the victorious members of the former Eighth Regiment were hailed for their brave and meritorious service, and it was stated that nearly every man who lived to return carried with him some kind of decoration for valor in action. Special honor was paid to the 144 members who never returned home, and a plaque was installed on the exterior of the Armory listing their name and rank. In honor of Lieutenant George R. Giles, the highest ranking officer to be killed in action, the name of the street on which the Armory was located was changed from Forest to Giles Avenue by special provision of the City Council in 1922.

The "Fighting 8th" and its successors eventually incorporated into several specialized

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet EIGHTH REGIMENT ARMORY

Item number 7 & 8

Page 2

military divisions, with a new armory headquarters at 5200 South Cottage Grove Avenue, designed by the architectural firm of Perkins, Chatten and Hammond in 1931. The historic Eighth Regiment Armory still stands largely as originally designed, although it is currently vacant. Several proposals have been offered for the rehabilitation of the building for productive new use.

VIRGINIA, Rockbridge County, Mechanicsville vicinity, Locust Hill, VA 608 (05/12/86)

WASHINGTON, Clark County, Vancouver, Anderson—Beletski Prune Farm, 4119 NW McCann Rd.
(05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Cowlitz County, Castle Rock vicinity, Laughlin Round Barn, 8249 Barnes Dr.
(05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Lewis County, Chehalis, Palmer, O. K., House, 673 NW Pennsylvania (05/15/86)

WASHINGTON, Snohomish County, Everett, Weyerhaeuser Office Building, 1710 W. Marine View Dr.
(05/14/86)

WASHINGTON, Whitman County, Oakesdale vicinity, Hanford, Edwin H., House, N of WA 271
(05/15/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Barbour County, Philippi, Philippi B & O Railroad Station, 146 N. Main St. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Beallmore (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1500 Pleasant Ave.
(05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Brooke Cemetery (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 2200 Pleasant
Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Duval, General L.H., Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA),
1222 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Elmhurst (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1606 Pleasant Ave.
(05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Hall, Lewis, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1300
Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Paul, Harry and Louisiana Beall, Mansion (Pleasant
Avenue MRA), 1312 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Tarr, Lucy, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue MRA), 1456
Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WEST VIRGINIA, Brooke County, Wellsburg, Fleming, David and Lucy Tarr, Mansion (Pleasant Avenue
MRA), 2000 Pleasant Ave. (05/16/86)

WYOMING, Carbon County, Saratoga vicinity, Jack Creek Guard Station, Off FDR No. 452 (05/15/86)

The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were excluded from a previous
notice:

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Chicago Bee Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3647—3655 S. State St.
(04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Eighth Regiment Armory (Black Metropolis TR), 3533 S. Giles Ave.
(04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Jordon Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3529—3549 S. State St.
(04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Overton Hygienic Building (Black Metropolis TR), 3619—3627 S.
State St. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Unity Hall (Black Metropolis TR), 3140 S. Indiana Ave. (04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Victory Sculpture (Black Metropolis TR), Thirty-fifth St. at King Dr.
(04/30/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Wabash Avenue YMCA (Black Metropolis TR), 3763 S. Wabash Ave.
(04/30/86)